

LACTATION IN MALES

We passed through the village of Arenas [Venezuela], inhabited by Indians, who are of the same race as those of San Fernando. But Arenas is no longer a Mission; and the natives, governed by a regular priest, are better clothed, and more civilized. Their church is also known in the country on account of some rude paintings. A narrow border encloses figures of armadilloes, caymans, jaguars, and other animals peculiar to the new world.

In this village lives a labourer, Francisco Lozano, who presented a physiological phenomenon, highly calculated to strike the imagination, though it is very conformable to the known laws of organized nature. This man has suckled a child with his own milk. The mother having fallen sick, the father, to quiet the infant, took it into his bed, and pressed it to his bosom. Lozano, then thirty-two years of age, had never remarked till that day that he had milk: but the irritation of the nipple, sucked by the child, caused the accumulation of that liquid. The milk was thick and very sweet. The father, astonished at the increased size of his breast, suckled his child two or three times a day during five months. He drew on himself the attention of his neighbours, but he never thought, as he probably would have done in Europe, of deriving any advantage from the curiosity he excited. We saw the certificate, which had been drawn up on the spot, to attest this remarkable fact, eye-witnesses of which are still living. They assured us, that, during this suckling, the child had no other nourishment than the milk of his father. Lozano, who was not at Arenas during our journey in the Missions, came to us at Cumana. He was accompanied by his son, who was then thirteen or fourteen years of age. Mr. Bonpland examined with attention the father's breast, and found it wrinkled like those of women who have given suck. He observed, that the left breast in particular was much enlarged; which Lozano explained to us from the circumstance, that the two breasts did not furnish milk in the same abundance. Don Vicente Emparan, Governor of the province, sent a circumstantial account of this phenomenon to Cadiz.

It is not a very uncommon circumstance, to find, both among human-kind and animals, males whose breasts contain milk; and the climate does

not appear to exert any marked influence on the more or less abundance of this secretion. The ancients cite the milk of the he goats of Lemnos and Corsica. In our own time, we have seen in the country of Hanover, a he goat, which for a great number of years was milked every other day, and yielded more milk than a female goat. Among the signs of the pretended weakness of the Americans, travellers have mentioned the milk contained in the breast of men. It is however improbable, that it has ever been observed in a whole tribe, in some part of America unknown to modern travellers; and I can affirm, that at present it is not more common in the new continent, than in the old. The labourer of Arenas, whose history we have just related, is not of the copper-coloured race of Chayma Indians: he is a white man, descended from Europeans. Moreover, the anatomists of Petersburg have observed, that among the lower orders of the people in Russia, milk in the breasts of men is much more frequent, than among the more southern nations; and the Russians have never been deemed weak and effeminate.

There exists among the varieties of our kind a race of men, whose breasts at the age of puberty acquire a considerable bulk. Lozano did not belong to this class; and he often repeated to us, that it was only the irritation of the nipple, in consequence of the suction, which caused the flow of the milk. This confirms the observation of the ancients, "that men, who have a small quantity of milk, yield it in abundance, when their breasts are sucked." These singular effects of a nervous stimulant were known to the shepherds of Greece; those of Mount Ooeta rubbed the dugs of the young goats, that had not yet conceived, with nettles, to make them produce milk.

When we reflect on the whole of the vital phenomena, we find, that no one of them is entirely isolated. In every age examples are cited of young girls not marriageable, or women withered by age, who have suckled children. Among men these examples are infinitely more rare; and after numerous researches, I have not found above two or three. One is cited by the anatomist of Verona, Alexander Benedictus, who lived toward the end of the fifteenth century. He relates the history of an inhabitant of Syria, who, to calm the uneasiness of his child, after the death of the mother, pressed it to his bosom. The milk immediately came with such abundance, that the father could take on himself the nourishment of his child, without assistance. Other examples are related by Santorellus, Paria, and Robert, bishop of Cork. The greater part of these

phenomena having been noticed in times very remote, it is not uninteresting to physiology, that we can confirm them in our own days. Besides, they bear very strongly on the long disputed question respecting final causes. The existence of the nipple in men has long puzzled philosophers; and it has even been recently affirmed, "that Nature has refused to one of the sexes the faculty of suckling, because this faculty would not accord with the dignity of man."

Humboldt, A. von: *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent, During the Years 1799-1804*, Translated by Helen M. Williams. London, Longman et al., 1818, vol. 3, pp. 46-51 (footnotes omitted).